

Sanitized Copy Approved for
Release 2010/07/29 :
CIA-RDP85T00875R00100001

Sanitized Copy Approved for
Release 2010/07/29 :
CIA-RDP85T00875R00100001

review

completed

21 June 1960

OCI No. 2928/60

Copy No. 120

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE STAFF STUDY

CHINESE POPULATION INCREASE: THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS
(Reference Title: POLO VIII-60)

ILLEGIB

Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

**THIS MATERIAL CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECT-
ING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES
WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE LAWS,
TITLE 18, USC, SECTIONS 793 AND 794, THE TRANSMIS-
SION OR REVELATION OF WHICH IN ANY MANNER TO
AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.**

**ON-FILE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY**

Chinese Population Increase: The Political Implications

This is a working paper, reflecting information available through May 1960.

[REDACTED]

25X1

The Sino-Soviet Studies Group would welcome either written or oral comment on this paper.

25X1

[REDACTED]

The writer desires to acknowledge the valuable assistance given by analysts in other officers. Special mention must be made of the Foreign Manpower Research Office of the Bureau of the Census, which provided many source and bibliographic materials for this study.

A contribution which saved weeks of spade work was the draft of a manuscript on Chinese population policy prepared by John Aird of the Foreign Manpower Research Office. Apart from the cogent presentation of issues in Mr. Aird's work, his voluminous footnotes directed attention to source material that would otherwise have been missed. Later, he and [REDACTED] the Office of Research and Reports--[REDACTED] concerned with population issues in Communist China--reviewed this study in detail. As a result of their suggestions, portions of the original text were revised.

25X1

25X1

25X1

The generosity must also be acknowledged of Leo A. Orleans of the Air Research Division in the Library of Congress, who furnished copies both of his published articles and of a manuscript still in draft. The manuscript will appear as an article, "Birth Control in China," in the summer 1960 issue of China Quarterly.

[REDACTED] the Office of Research and Reports went over the text and was particularly helpful on the subject of Chinese agriculture.

25X1

[REDACTED] the Office of Research and Reports also went over the text and made important corrections in the section on China's economic prospects.

25X1

Although the suggestions of these analysts have in general been incorporated into the study, they do not share responsibility for all the views expressed. The conclusions are those of the writer.

SECRET

SECRET

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY	1
I. THE DEMOGRAPHIC SETTING	1
Census and vital figures.	1
The population outlook.	2
II. THE ECONOMIC PROSPECT	5
The food outlook	5
Lines of probable development in agriculture.	6
Industrial outlook.	9
III. BIRTH CONTROL IN CHINA.	11
The attitude in the early years	11
The campaign begins	13
The campaign under way.	15
Hundred Flowers	16
Turnabout	18
Effectiveness of the birth control campaign	20
Leap Forward.	21
IV. POSITIONS OF THE PARTY LEADERS.	25
Mao Tse-tung.	25
Liu Shao-chi.	27
Chou En-lai	28
Others of the inner circle.	29
Other politburo members	32
The line-up	34
V. POPULATION DOCTRINE AND THE SINO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP	36
Marx and Malthus.	36
The Soviet viewpoint.	38
The East European experience.	42
VI. THE GEOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATION.	45
Chinese internal migration.	45
The Siberian "vacant lot"	47
The balance of forces	50

SECRET

SECRET

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This study is addressed to the political developments attending rapid population increase in Communist China. The survey is not exhaustive but rather directed to two main areas of examination: (1) the varying attitudes of the Chinese Communist leaders, and (2) the impact of China's population problem on the Sino-Soviet relationship. Although these terms of reference are political, the study opens with a review of the Chinese demographic setting and its economic correlates. This review presents the projections that economic intelligence currently accepts as authoritative or reasonable.

It is possible to demonstrate mathematically that, at the current rate of population growth, the Chinese would number some eight billion persons a hundred years from now--more than 2.5 times the present population of the earth. For three reasons, a look so far into the future is not attempted in this study. First, economic and other circumstances will probably limit population growth long before China becomes this crowded. Second, population projections beyond a few decades are notably unreliable. Third, the immediate intelligence need is for a shorter-term study.

However, the compass of a study on population should be longer than the five years or so customary to strategic estimates. For the moment at least, economic progress in Communist China is keeping pace with and in some sectors running ahead of population growth. But demographic factors, like those disabilities which do not diminish the talents of athletes in their prime, are persistent and long range. Thus this study looks forward 25 years to 1985.

The prospect for continued Communist domination in China rests to a large extent on the regime's ability to cope with the economic problems that population pressure will generate. While the economic aspect of the problem is not central to this study, it is pertinent; the political analyst should appreciate that China's economic growth may well be adequate to the task of sustaining the rapidly expanding population. The judgment is admittedly qualified, simply because the demographic and economic projections discussed in Sections I and II

SECRET

are not firm. But if the projections are accepted as reasonable working hypotheses, it follows that the resource/population ratio in itself will not necessarily be so unsatisfactory as to topple the Communist regime in the period under review. It may, however, be a persuasive factor in politburo discussions and eventuate in a more forceful birth control program than the Communists have so far considered.

The political analysis proper begins in Section III, which discusses the regime's irresolute measures to popularize birth control in China. There is evidence that the Communists were troubled by the difficulties of reconciling Marxist dogma and economic logic, and it appears likely that the advisability of birth control was debated in the party hierarchy from the politburo down. The differences were not so serious, however, as to lead to irreconcilable divergencies among the most important leaders. Mao Tse-tung and the likely rivals for the succession, Liu Shao-chi and Chou En-lai, have all shown interest in birth control, although Mao and Liu may have been a bit more scrupulous than Chou in clinging to Marxist and anti-Malthusian standpoints.

The possibilities of doctrinal divergencies between the Chinese and Soviet Communists on the issue of population limitation are examined next. The dominant strain in Communist polemics on population is a vitriolic hostility to Malthusian arguments. The Communists tolerate no suggestions that the escape from mass poverty is blocked ultimately by biologic rather than institutional barriers. It is shown, however, that the orthodox texts are not entirely devoid of indications that policies to limit population size are acceptable in certain stages of development. If the Chinese party is at all scrupulous in its doctrinal formulations on the population question (and it has spoken with due care so far), the Soviet leaders may have their private reservations but will be reluctant to take open issue. This judgment is buttressed by Soviet taciturnity to date, not only with respect to China's population policy, but in connection also with birth control programs adopted in Eastern Europe. The Russians themselves, moreover, have gone on record since Stalin's death in favor of easing restrictions against abortions and contraception.

The geopolitical as distinct from the doctrinal aspect is examined in the final section. It is concluded that the danger to the Soviet Union of land-hungry Chinese seeking lebensraum in the Siberian "vacant lot" is minimal within the next 25 years. China's large population nevertheless remains a major element in its strategic stature; as the spokesman of most of the people

SECRET

SECRET

in the Communist camp, Peiping is accorded due hearing and deference in bloc councils. It now speaks for two-thirds of the population. By 1985, the proportion will be closer to three-fourths, and Soviet leaders may view with misgivings the effect on the balance of forces within the bloc.

Soviet leaders publicly dismiss as provocative any suggestions that Chinese hordes pose a long-range threat to the USSR. The Russian man in the street has been franker to voice his misgivings, and there is evidence that his expressions of apprehension reflect influential viewpoints, however, impolitic it may be to express such viewpoints officially. To many thoughtful persons in the USSR, the ever-swelling number of Chinese is stirring up a cloud from the east that must progressively darken the prospects for harmony in the Sino-Soviet relationship.

SECRET

SECRET

I. THE DEMOGRAPHIC SETTING

Communist China is by far the most populous country in the world. Its rate of population increase, moreover, is one of the world's fastest.

Census and vital figures

According to Communist statistics, the population of mainland China as of 30 June 1953 was about 583,000,000 people. The figure--some 100,000,000 higher than most estimates at the time--now is generally, if not universally, accepted as reasonably accurate. Although Peiping had to settle on estimates for some of the ethnic minorities in remote areas, it claims that 574,000,000 people were counted by direct enumeration in the 1953 census; errors for the relatively few not reached by the census takers should not affect the general reliability of the count.

While the difficulties of enumeration in an area like China preclude the degree of accuracy possible in Western censuses, the schedules and procedures used indicate that Peiping made an earnest effort to conduct the country's first nationwide count by modern methods. As a check on the reliability of the census, the Communists resurveyed some 9 percent of the people. This sample survey yielded relatively small discrepancies from the census count.

In the absence of good vital statistics, the Communists conducted a special enumeration of 30 million persons during the census in an effort to come up with reliable figures on births and deaths. The Chinese birth rate, according to the results of this enumeration, was 37 per thousand (37 babies born annually for every thousand people in the population); the death rate was given as 17 per thousand. These figures, in contrast to the over-all population total, are suspect. An analysis of the census tabulation of children under five years of age indicates that 37 per thousand is a considerable understatement of the birth rate. It has been suggested that both the birth and death rates given by the sample survey err on the low side.

However, the difference between the two rates--20 per thousand or 2 percent compounded annually--may be a fair approximation of the rate of population increase in the early 1950s. It

SECRET

is on the order of twice previous estimates, but not out of line with demonstrated achievements after World War II in other Asian areas. Starting out with very high birth and death rates, these areas have effected sharp reductions in death rates attendant upon dramatic progress in sanitation and public health. The sharpest cuts seem to have been made in infant mortality. "About two million more infants," claims Peiping, "survive annually than in pre-liberation days, as a result of the wide application of modern midwifery."

The Communists themselves show no disposition to discount the 2-percent growth rate. On the basis presumably of the more and more nearly complete birth and death registrations in their regimented society, the Communists have in fact steadily raised the figure. In their most recent statements, a 2.5-percent rate of natural increase has been mentioned. On the basis of a 2- to 2.5-percent rate of increase since the 1953 census, China's population today (1960) is estimated at possibly 690 million. By way of comparison with the next-ranking countries of the world in population size, mainland China has 1.7 times as many people as India, some 3.2 times as many as the USSR, and 3.8 times as many as the United States. And with its higher rate of natural increase, China leaves the others farther behind every year.

The population outlook

A growth rate of 2 percent confronts the Chinese Communists with the necessity of developing resources to support well over a billion people by the year 1985. If the growth rate is taken as 2.5 percent, the population will number some 1-1/4 billion in 1985.

These figures are not to be taken as forecasts. No matter how fast water levels may be rising, they will go only so high unless the dikes too are being built up. The population levels given for 1985 suggest what can happen only if economic output in China is adequate to support the number of people postulated by the projections. If such is not the case and the birth rate continues high, a situation analogous to water spill-over will obtain. Famine, deficiency diseases, and the other correlates of deepening poverty will raise the death rate and stabilize the population at a level that the economy can support.

The alternatives presented to the Chinese Communists then are: expand economic output or cut the birth rate. (The two choices are of course not mutually exclusive.) The economic

SECRET

outlook is discussed in the next section. Insofar as the birth rate is concerned, the following factors are likely to be governing up to 1985:

1. Birth control is neither widely approved nor practiced. Even if the Communists revive and intensify earlier efforts to popularize contraception, the results should take years to become evident. A particular handicap is the predominantly rural character of the Chinese population; unresponsive as China's urban residents showed themselves to birth control propaganda, the countryside is even more resistant. Judgments here, however have to be qualified by reservations relating to changes now under way in the social organization of Chinese rural society. On a priori grounds, extension of the "free supply" system of payments or partial payments by the communes on the basis of need would seem pronatalist in effect, relieving heads of large families from many economic anxieties. On the other hand, the family system has been the institutional basis of high birth rates in China, and the breakdown of old values is one of the declared purposes of the communes. If regimentation in the countryside takes forms envisaged by the more extreme elements in the party, there will be some additional disorganization of family units as a result of communal messes, rearing of children away from their parents, separation of aged from their relatives, and mobilization of men for work on distant projects. As Communist administration reaches deeper into rural life, the old adage "Heaven is high and the Emperor far away" will lose more and more of its force. With a blurring of the lines differentiating peasant from urban worker, both may become almost equally responsive to official and general social pressures making for lower birth rates.

2. Projections of the Chinese population by age groups have not been worked out for the next 25 years, but when completed, they may show a downward force on birth rates during some of the period because of a falling proportion of females of child-bearing age. On the other hand, there has probably been a rather precipitate decline in infant mortality recently, and this should increase the proportion of females of child-bearing age in the 1970s. However effective birth control propaganda and other social pressures are in cutting into family size, they may have to work against numerical factors tending to keep up the birth rate during at least some of the years in the period under purview. (1)

3. Even if the birth rate should decline, the total Chinese population will probably still increase rapidly. The

SECRET

SECRET

reason is that the death rate is expected to decline too. Recent experience in other Asian countries is indicative of potentialities that may well be realized during the next two decades, if not sooner, in Communist China through the spread of inoculations, wider applications of insecticides, and other advances in public health. Average death rates for 1935-39 in Ceylon, Taiwan, Malaya, and Singapore (the only four non-Communist areas of the Far East where official death registrations approach completion) ranged from 20 to about 25 per thousand. Fifteen years later, the death rates for these four areas ranged from 10 to 14 per thousand; they are still less today. While the Chinese birth rate may eventually move close to the falling death rate, the experience of other countries suggests a time lag. The expectation is for no closing of the gap sufficient to prevent a large increase in the population within the next 25 years.

The a priori judgments implicit in this presentation of the demographic vectors are numerous. Events may not work out as the mathematics foretell; indeed demographic projections constructed in recent years have proved embarrassingly wide of the mark. The error, however, is as likely as not to be an underestimate of later population growth. A billion-man China is an unsettling thought, but the burden of evidence indicates it to be a likely eventuality if the forces now at work continue to be operative.

SECRET

SECRET

II. THE ECONOMIC PROSPECT

While economies like Japan's have been able to sustain larger populations than agricultural resources permitted, the Chinese are apparently determined to stay self-sufficient in food. The decision is neither arbitrary nor irrational. Dependence on food imports to feed as little as 10 percent of China's present population would require about \$2 billion in foreign exchange outlays, equal to the value of all the industrial equipment and other goods the regime now buys abroad.

To date, the Communist record in keeping pace with population growth has been creditable. Taking over an economy that was a net importer of food, the regime has turned the country into a net exporter, although per capita consumption remains at subsistence levels. The First Five-Year Plan ended in 1957 with the amount of food available per capita as high as or barely higher than it was in 1952. The "leap forward" of 1958 increased production of food grains by about 15 percent over 1957, but there may have been a 10-percent drop back in 1959. (1)

The food outlook

The Chinese are clearly counting on further successes in expanding food output. A 12-year plan of agricultural development drafted in 1956 contained no specific goals, but politburo member Chen Po-ta said that agricultural output could be doubled in ten years. In the same vein, economic planner Li Fu-chun in October 1959 urged the technical modernization of Chinese agriculture within some ten years. "In this way," he concluded, "we shall be able to double and redouble our agricultural production under conditions where agricultural labor productivity is enormously increased while the total manpower used on agricultural production is substantially reduced." (2)

The projections of economic intelligence and Western agricultural analysts are more sober. The shock efforts of 1958 produced impressive results, but the inability to proceed to higher levels the next year demonstrates the very real limits imposed by weather, by the scarcity of arable land, and by technological backwardness. The expectation is that food production will go up by possibly 3 percent a year over the next decade. This would be somewhat better than the rate of population growth and perhaps barely enough to provide for the (3)

SECRET

SECRET

changes in consumption patterns associated with increasing urbanization of society. It would not afford much margin for the incentives needed to kindle the best production efforts of peasants and workers; and the regime would have compelling reasons for implementing and considerably strengthening its declared policy of encouraging birth control in China.

The reservations expressed in the preceding section with respect to the predictive value of demographic projections apply with still greater force to projections of food production. The variables are so many as to discourage extension of the 3-percent-per-year projection down to 1985. A great deal depends on decisions the regime will make with respect to the distribution of new investments between industry and agriculture. Apart from the direct investments in agriculture, particular importance will attach to funds allocated for the expansion of such support industries as chemical fertilizer, farm machinery, electric power. Decisions relating to the distribution of consumer goods between town and country may also be important.

Perhaps the factor of overriding significance will be the stage of China's industrialization after 1970--a state of advance that will permit the regime far greater latitude to increase investments in, say, chemical fertilizer plants than it enjoys today. The concluding pages of this section discuss the prospects for the industrial sector of the economy; it suffices here to note that some extraordinary advances are projected by economic intelligence. China's annual electric power production, for example, is estimated to go as high as 315 billion kilowatt-hours by 1970, about 15 percent above the current level in the USSR. There are grounds for estimating, therefore, that the regime will be able to increase substantially the allocations to agriculture and agricultural support industries after 1970 and that the subsequent expansion of food production for some years thereafter will be at a rate of growth higher than that achieved in the 1960s. Deeprooted convictions on the point are not justified, however, since higher allocations to agriculture may be called for merely to maintain the earlier growth rate.

Lines of probable development in agriculture

When the Communists consider themselves in a better position to direct more funds to agriculture, the expansion of crop acreage is a likely development. Only 11 percent of China's land is now under cultivation. Expansion of acreage to 13-15 percent of the area is considered economically practical in conservative calculations; much of the remaining land area

SECRET

is deemed entirely unsuited for cultivation barring a major revolution in agricultural technology. In the frontier areas, Manchuria is regarded as particularly promising. The completion of the railroad through Sinkiang in 1961 will open up new lands in the far West as well. Closer to home, there are economic possibilities in the reclamation of denuded hilly lands. The investment outlays required for expanding acreage are considerable however; in the competition for limited capital, the Communists will be disinclined in the next few years to give highest priority to a new-lands effort. Farm spokesman Teng Tzu-hui intimated in 1957 that better returns on capital were for the present obtainable from other programs. "It can be mentioned here," he observed, "that some difficulties have been encountered in the large-scale wasteland reclamation program in our country as a whole." (1)

China's most important recourse, even before acreage is expanded toward its outer limits, is to increase yields. Considerable progress has already been made along lines recommended by Nationalist technicians working with US advisers after the end of World War II: (2)

1. Extension of multiple cropping areas. The Communists claim that 40 percent of the farm land now yields more than one harvest. Further progress is promised.
2. Improvements in irrigation and flood control. Ambitious water conservancy projects now under way involve construction of some of the world's largest dams in the Yellow, Yangtse, and other major riverways. On a smaller scale, local government units are financing the construction of numerous wells, ponds, and irrigation works.
3. Control of animal and plant diseases and insect pests. Prewar losses from insects, destructive birds, and other animals were serious; 12,000,000 tons were lost from damage by insects alone. The Chinese at present do not have sufficient quantities of cheap insecticides and fungicides and equipment for applying these materials on a massive scale.
4. Improvements in seed strains and livestock breeding. The Nationalists introduced new varieties of cotton, wheat, rice, and tobacco and conducted some promising research in soybeans, millet, kaoliang, and potatoes. The Communists are carrying on this work with a view to developing strains which are quicker maturing, larger yielding, and more resistant to disease. Communist research activities are also directed to the problem of infectious diseases in animals, which before

SECRET

SECRET

World War II killed off some 25 percent of the hogs and 60 percent of the poultry over year.

5. Increased efficiency of labor. Underemployment features the rural economy most of the year. But at peak seasons, labor shortages often develop; failure to complete plowing, harrowing, and sowing within a few days after rain in certain areas can reduce yields appreciably. The demands of harvest time and need for quick irrigation of fields during dry spells also occasion labor shortages that may seriously impair yields. In the collective and later the commune forms of organization, the Communists claim to have organized rural labor much more efficiently than was possible in "pre-liberation" years and thereby minimized losses from temporary labor shortages.

6. Expansion of fertilizer production. Projected increases in food production to keep pace with probable population growth over the next decade would boost annual requirements of chemical fertilizer to perhaps 25,000,000 tons. By contrast, present applications total about 3,000,000 tons. However, the Communists are planning to turn out as much as 7,000,000 tons in 1962, and are looking forward to 20,000,000 tons by 1969. There is some doubt that this last figure will be reached, but if domestic production is supplemented by some imports, fertilizer availability may come within the general range of estimated requirements. (1) (2) (3)

The over-all picture is one of Communist vigor and determination to expand food production at least as fast as population growth in the coming decade. In a sense, the Communists will be conducting a holding operation in agriculture during these ten years, throwing their greatest energies into the heavy industry sector. In the 1970s and 1980s, they will not be able to put off progressively larger investments to increase agricultural output (e.g. in fertilizer plants); but their record so far and their prospective industrial capabilities as described below suggest that the Communists may well make the decisions to increase the outlays when necessary. Since the authorities seem disposed to defer such decisions, they will presumably continue to view with some favor the idea of a curb on population growth. Possible technological breakthroughs (hydroponics, unicellular plant organisms, harvesting of the sea, solar energy for irrigation purposes, or other lines of advance conjectured by anti-Malthusian optimists) would of course facilitate matters for the regime and weaken the pressures for implementing a population limitation policy.

SECRET

Industrial outlook

Food supplies constitute a limit on population size, but techniques of cultivation and levels of investment in agriculture are closely related to the state of industrial technology. It is the industrial societies (even those that are self-sufficient in food production) that can support large population densities comfortably, and it is in the industrial sector that the Chinese Communists have made their most impressive achievements. Steel ingot production, which stood at 1-1/3 million tons in 1952 before the First Five-Year Plan, came to over 13,000,000 in 1959. Electric power output rose from 7 billion kilowatt-hours to 39 billion. Railway transportation, coal mining, cement, machine tools, all made giant strides. Over-all industrial production went up on an average of 20 percent per annum.

The rapid industrial growth has contributed to a rate of increase in gross national product that comes to 9 percent since 1952, well above the 2- or 2.5-percent rate of population increase. The channeling of national product into investment funds has kept standards of living very low for most of the people but is sustaining a development that is likely to make China the dominant industrial power in Asia well before 1985.

The high percentage increases in China are not altogether attributable to the low absolute levels on which the calculations are based. In key segments of the industrial sector (steel, coal, electric power), the Chinese have for several years now been past the line from which the USSR started in 1928. The Chinese continue to expand production as fast as or faster than did the USSR.

The thesis has been advanced that the need to meet the bare subsistence requirements of a rapidly expanding population will eventually force the regime to cut back on new investments and stifle further industrial growth. Whatever the ultimate validity of this viewpoint, the accepted projections do not bear it out for the shorter term. Investments in Communist China, which ran around 17 percent of gross national product under the First Five-Year Plan, now come to about 33 percent. In 1970, the regime is expected to allocate 40 percent of the gross national product to investments.

As the dynamics work out, gross national product will go up by about 8 percent a year over the next decade. Industrial production will increase 14 percent per annum. By 1970, steel

SECRET

production in China is expected to go above 40,000,000 tons, the level of Soviet production in 1954; electric power at 315 billion kilowatt-hours will exceed today's level of Soviet output; petroleum production at 36,000,000 tons will come close to the Soviet level of 1950. The structure of the industrial economy in the 1970s and 1980s is more difficult to foresee; the consensus, however, is that industry in China will not be the limiting factor on population growth during this period and that industry will be in an increasingly good position to support the agricultural sector with supplies of fertilizer, irrigation machinery, tractors, other farm equipment, construction materials, and pesticides.

SECRET

III. BIRTH CONTROL IN CHINA

The Chinese Communists, wrote Liu Shao-chi in October 1959, have been "flexibly applying the general principles of Marxism-Leninism in the light of the concrete conditions in China." As a characterization of Peiping's approach to the population question, the statement could be improved by substituting the word "irresolutely" for "flexibly." The reason is in large part reluctance to admit previous error. The "concrete conditions" of high population pressure had always been articulated in greatest detail by non-Communists, men whose formulations did not place on capitalism and imperialism the prime responsibility for mass pauperism in China. In the orthodox tradition that flowed from Marx's original fulminations against Malthus, the Communists retorted that a recast social order would release society's productive energies and provide amply for China's millions. The definition of position was vehement, so that the Communists were left with only limited room for doctrinal maneuver when the responsibilities of office forced them to examine the issue anew. (1)

The attitude in the early years

It took several years of office for the "concrete conditions" to impress themselves on Chinese Communist thinking. The early statements reflected official confidence that the size of the population was a major ingredient of national strength rather than weakness. With pride and no trace of misgiving, Mao referred to China in 1949 as "forming one-quarter of mankind." The official New China News Agency affirmed at this time that China's population was a "very good thing." The Communists could cope with a population many times the present size. "All pessimistic statements are groundless." As late as April 1952, the official party newspaper People's Daily, denounced birth control as a "means of killing off the Chinese people." (2) (3) (4)

The arithmetic of national accounting probably had an all-important influence in modifying official thinking. Determined to maximize capital accumulation, the Communists had nevertheless to allow some part of the national product for

SECRET

SECRET

current consumption. In the predominantly agricultural setting characterized by much rural underemployment, the national product seemed a derivative more of acres cultivated than of numbers of persons working. Total consumption, on the other hand, depended on population size. At the current stage of national development, the economic planners may well have concluded that fewer people would not reduce national product but would cut total consumption and thereby permit a larger amount for capital accumulation.

This line of reasoning would have carried the greatest conviction after the end of the Korean fighting. Wartime, when national security seems closely related to the size of armies that can be mustered, does not generally provide the most favorable milieu for birth control programs. After the middle of 1953, the economic as compared with strictly military rationale became more persuasive. In August 1953, the Government Administration Council headed by Premier Chou En-lai (the present State Council) issued a directive that the Ministry of Public Health "help the masses exercise birth control." The directive expressed approval of the Ministry's relaxation of regulations relating to contraception and abortion. Only four months earlier, the local authorities in Canton had prohibited the importation of contraceptives, even those prescribed by physicians. (1)

The authorities may have been newly impressed by the economic arguments, but they moved with caution. There had been no effort as yet to reconcile the contradictions with previously expressed positions on the virtue of a large population, and the directive to the Ministry of Public Health was given no publicity. In fact, it was not until 1957--four years later--that the public media made any reference to the directive. (2)

The re-examination of traditional viewpoints on birth control received fresh impetus when the results of the 1953 census was tabulated in 1954. The public commentary on the census results hailed the totals and used the occasion for attacks in the old vein against defeatist Malthusians. But with the total population now revealed as 100,000,000 above the previous estimates and increasing by 12,000,000 or so every year, the demographic-economic calculus apparently persuaded all but the extreme doctrinaires that a campaign to limit births was in order.

- 12 -

SECRET

The campaign begins

The party moved gingerly; it was prepared, if reluctant, to encourage birth control, but it was by no means willing to concede any merit to Malthusian viewpoints. When British Labor party leader Clement Attlee visited China in the summer of 1954, Mao is said to have acknowledged the desirability of birth control after the population reached 700,000,000. But in the meantime there was no ostensible disposition to question the value of rapid population growth. The Chinese reaction to mention of the problem by any member of the British delegation was to shrug it off indifferently. (1)

The first public appeal for birth control was in the nature of a trial balloon. The party still shied from espousing population limitation. The call was sounded by Shao Li-tzu, a non-Communist "democratic personage," in September 1954 at the First National People's Congress and again in a newspaper article the following December. Shao tried manfully to show that there was no contradiction between birth control practice and anti-Malthusian doctrine. (2) (3)

Its extensive territory and huge population, said Shao, made China a powerful nation. But the past had left a legacy of backwardness which would take years to overcome. In the meantime, there was a lack of educational facilities, and too many children meant that too many went without schooling. A further consideration was the danger to the health of mothers weakened by frequent childbirth. Shao reached out for whatever support he could find in the sacred texts and in Soviet practice. Lenin, he observed, favored the annulment of legislation that penalized the dissemination of birth control information. And in the USSR, the sale of drugs for birth control "is not prohibited."

In the China that had not yet experimented with "hundred flowers," it is probable that Shao Li-tzu made his proposals only after prior assurances from the authorities. The unpublicized 1953 directive to the Ministry of Public Health cited above showed the turn official thought was taking. And Shao disclosed that in July 1954, prior to his own public remarks, the Ministry had already submitted some birth control proposals for approval by the Government Administration Council.

SECRET

SECRET

The mail response to Shao Li-tzu's remarks was not uniformly favorable. It is possible that the pro and con discussions which were allowed in 1954, and indeed in the years that followed, reflected uncertainties and disagreements at the top leadership. There was the customary display of mass participation in the attainment of consensus decided in the final analysis by the leadership, but there was considerable inconstancy in the characterization of correct and incorrect standpoints. Shao originally opposed raising the age of marriage, for example; he later espoused the idea. There were similar turnabouts before reaching settled positions on abortion and sterilization. (1)

Pending a crystallization of official doctrine, the party continued to stay aloof from the issue. Liu Shao-chi called a symposium on birth control in December 1954, and it was agreed that research groups on the subject would be organized under the State Council. But it was not until 1957 that Liu's convocation of the symposium and the subsequent organization of the research groups were mentioned in the press. In March 1955, a national party conference expressed the party's endorsement of birth control "to a certain extent," but again the Communists did not publicize their action at the time. Undecided on its interests in the matter, the leadership may have awaited general reaction at home, (and perhaps official reaction in Moscow) before definitely articulating its own stand. (2)

Throughout most of this period, events went little beyond the examination and discussion of issues. Beginning in 1955, however, instructional articles on contraceptive techniques appeared in party and semi-official journals. The educational effort fell far short of a mass propaganda campaign, for the authorities still felt constrained to establish first the doctrinal legitimacy of population control. Those who sought invariable guidance in Soviet practice were enjoined in February 1955 by China Youth (organ of the Young Communist League) to note that the USSR "recognized the practice of contraception as a democratic right." After the socialist economy had developed, the USSR had indeed "found it possible to...encourage the breeding of more people," but even so, the Kremlin authorities did not ban contraception. (3)

Above all, the Communists were anxious to avoid the least imputation that they were borrowing from Malthus. (4)

SECRET

SECRET

The theoretical journal Study addressed itself with characteristic venom in October 1955 to unregenerates who now said, "Look! The Communists too need Malthus no less than they need Marx." Birth control, affirmed the journal, "has nothing at all in common with Malthus." Personal and family considerations rather than the broader interests of state and society were emphasized as the reasons for smaller families. (7)

The campaign under way

The campaign seemed unusually long in the making--reflecting perhaps the indecision at the top--but by August 1956, it was well under way. The Ministry of Public Health in that month issued a directive calling for technical guidance, training of cadres, and establishment of birth control clinics. And at the eighth party congress in September, speakers came out unequivocally in support of family limitation. The old saws about protecting women and children were repeated, but these probably never gave full satisfaction to the Communist ideologists, whose terms of reference were really social rather than individual. Premier Chou En-lai indicated the nature of the social interest in his Report on the Proposals for the Second Five-Year Plan for Development of the National Economy. "We must understand," he said, "that in a country like ours where the economy is backward and the population is large, shortages of materials will occur frequently for a long time to come, whereas any surplus will be transient." The surplus that Chou sought was necessary for capital accumulation. The thesis had long been expressed in non-Communist circles; its invective against Malthus notwithstanding, the party could only come up with a formulation that was cast pretty much in terms that were later to be characterized as neo-Malthusian. (2)

The ideology was unsatisfying but the bureaucracy was energized. In the later months of 1956 and in 1957, the activists at local levels got into gear with promotional activities to popularize birth control. Illustrative posters and models, embarrassingly graphic to some Western observers, illustrated contraceptive techniques. Apothecaries featured large displays of birth control devices to the public. Discussion meetings, lantern slides, all the customary vehicles of mass propaganda were employed to bring the message to the people. Training programs in birth control were set up for (3)

SECRET

SECRET

cadres. Clinics to furnish information on the subject were established. The method was persuasion; it was not politic at this stage to incorporate the elements of coercion common to other mass movements. But it was clear enough that population limitation had become official policy.

Hundred Flowers

In the first half of 1957, the birth control advocates in China advanced to highly exposed un-Marxist positions--a development best understood in the context of the post-Stalin liberalization which Mao Tse-tung characteristically modified with his own Chinese accents. In the spring of 1956, Mao issued his appeal to "let a hundred flowers bloom together, let a hundred schools of thought contend." Communist commentary in the weeks that followed endeavored to convince the wary intelligentsia that the area of permissible debate, if not of acceptable doctrine, would be substantially enlarged. True, freedom of thought would be confined "inside the camp of the people"; "only dialectical materialism is the truth," and debates would lead to the truth. But the authorities seemed genuinely interested in evoking at least the display of more vigorous discussions. The role of puppet parties in voicing the interests of the nonproletarian classes was emphasized. Intellectuals were assured that any fresh formulations in the natural sciences would not be labeled with the epithets feudal or capitalistic. University curricula were broadened to allow lectures on the philosophies of Hegel and Bertrand Russell, on Anglo-American law, on Keynesian economics.

The intellectuals--cowed by earlier campaigns against nonconformity--at first declined the invitation to bare their necks. Mao re-extended the invitation in his February 1957 "secret" speech on contradictions, which distinguished between antagonistic and nonantagonistic contradictions. He stressed the nonantagonistic character of contradictions in present-day China and urged that these were best resolved by free discussion, not terror. The edited version of the speech, which the Communists published in June, contained reservations which were not in the original; the effect of the original remarks and of the extensive propaganda that followed was to elicit livelier debate than the authorities had counted on. A heated literary controversy attended the publication of a

SECRET

SECRET

short novel Young Newcomer to the Organization Department, a Chinese counterpart of Dudintsev's Not by Bread Alone. In the discussions on population, the proponents of birth control, both in and out of the party, were finally emboldened to elaborate their arguments along lines that were awkwardly near to Malthusian propositions. The humanitarian grounds of mother and family welfare gave way to frankly economic considerations.

The new tenor of the discussions was evident in the remarks of ethnologist Wu Ching-chao at a meeting of labor cadres in Peiping on 15 February. The growth of population, said Wu, was outstripping the gains in employment. There were 12,000,000 more people in the population every year, some 6,000,000 more in the labor force. Only a million was being absorbed by industry. It was impossible to open up enough new land to absorb the remainder in agriculture. (1)

Carrying the discussion to other ground, but with clear if unconscious affinity for neo-Malthusian logic, the China Youth Daily on 23 February observed that food production had increased 5 percent annually since 1949. About a third of the increase, however, had gone simply to maintain existing standards of consumption. It was further noted that it had been necessary to divert output to such nonproductive outlays as creches, schools, and other facilities to care for the young. (2)

A symposium on birth control convened by the authorities in Peiping on 20 February indicated the topic that would engross many of the delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in March. The health of mothers received scant attention at the conference sessions; speakers dwelt rather on the need for birth control to cope with employment problems, shortages of investment funds, and other economic difficulties. Chung Hui-lan, superintendent of the Central People's Hospital in Peiping, sought to appall the delegates by the projection of a 10-billion-man China in 144 years if the population increased by 2 percent annually; at 3 percent, he warned, it would take only 96 years. He disputed the view that virgin lands could take care of the population increase. He urged research to ascertain an optimum population size and an optimum rate of population growth for China. It was clear in any event, he went on to say, that the population was growing too fast, and the birth rate should be brought down to the level of the death rate. By 1972, he (3)

SECRET

SECRET

hoped that the population could be stabilized at around 700 million.

Chung Hui-lan's views apparently reflected influential opinion in the party and government. When the Minister of Public Health addressed the delegates, she acknowledged that China was indeed an "overpopulated country." Without birth control, the country could not quickly become prosperous and strong. The ministry, she said, would relax earlier restraints on induced abortion and sterilization. This announcement she made "with the greatest reluctance," in view of popular feelings on the subject. In the milieu of "hundred flowers," a later speaker felt bold enough to voice his continued opposition to abortion and sterilization practices. (1)

Malthus' "moral restraint" against early marriage had an obvious appeal to some of the delegates. The Marriage Law of 1950 had set the minimum age of marriage for females at 18 years of age, for males at 20 years. (The comparable figures under the Nationalists had been 16 and 18.) Li Chien-sheng expressed the conviction that "society should be made to favor late marriages...the young boys should thus be ideologically indoctrinated." (2)

Within and outside the sessions of the conference, the refrain "we are not Malthusians" was recurrent. As the official People's Daily explained it in March, "proper" birth control was diametrically opposed to Malthusianism; the Communists wanted to accelerate the improvement of living standards not prevent their deterioration. The admission that population increase had a depressant influence on living standards was in fact in the Malthusian rather than Marxian tradition. Yet (or perhaps on that account), the disclaimers of Malthusian sympathies were vehement. (3) (4)

Turnabout

Liberation in China was over by the summer of 1957. In hindsight, the intellectuals who took seriously the invitation to "let a hundred schools of thought contend" seem naive indeed. They had been wary enough at first, but once they found their tongues they began to let loose what Peiping was to describe as "frantic attacks" on the Communist system. The Communist

SECRET

SECRET

party was accused of being a privileged group which ruled China as a private empire, enjoying luxury and power while the people suffered. Artists and writers demanded freedom from supervision by ignorant party members. One instructor at People's University in Peiping warned of mass uprisings, said the party's attitude of "I am the state" was intolerable. Disaffection at some schools culminated in student demonstrations and riots.

The memory of Hungary was still fresh, and the regime felt impelled to launch a "life-and-death struggle" against the rightists." Criticism, the press affirmed, was a privilege reserved to the people, not to enemies of the people. On the population question, the Malthusian cast of some of the recent utterances was roundly condemned. The category of "rightists," it was made clear, included all those who took the stand that a huge population meant a low rate of economic growth. It was not admissible to sow such doubts about the possibility of building China into a strong socialist power. One research worker had gone so far, the indignant Communists averred, as to envision a situation in which China's burgeoning population brought a deterioration in well-being, wholesale rioting by mothers, storming of schools whose facilities were insufficient to accommodate all would-be entrants, and a desertion of the land by rural youth frustrated by overcrowding. (1)

The changed climate discouraged further free examination and discussion of the population issue. There could be no sympathy, according to an article published the Peoples Daily in October 1957, with those who took advantage of the population problem to bring assaults on the party and on socialism. The theory that overpopulation was a fundamental problem of society was an enemy weapon "to paralyze the revolutionary consciousness of the working class." However, an editorial in another issue of the paper that month came out with a strong defense of birth control. The editorial this time based its logic on the old familiar ground of family welfare. Evidently considering that this ground alone did not make for an entirely convincing argument, the daily acknowledged on 1 February 1958 that population policy was based also on the limited capabilities of the national economy. It was emphasized, however, that these limitations were transitory. A large population in itself was by no means "absolutely a bad thing." (2) (3)

- 19 -

SECRET

SECRET

The apprehensions about the resource-population balance which had induced the Communists to accept a birth control campaign in the beginning were evidently still strong. These antedated the period of "hundred flowers" and continued to suggest the wisdom of pursuing policies to curtail population growth. It was too early for figures of the 1957 harvest, but the outlook in grains was for no significant increase over the previous year.

So the discussion was pulled back from advanced standpoints, but the frank anatomical models remained on exhibition. Pictorial pamphlets on birth control were printed in quantity. The cooperatives, women organizations, trade unions, and medical associations were all enlisted in the campaign to get the word to the masses. At the Pugwash Conference in Nova Scotia in the spring of 1958, the Chinese Communist delegate presented a paper in which he expressed confidence that "within a reasonably short period, our population will become stationary."

25X1

Effectiveness of the birth control campaign

The difficulty in clarifying their theoretical position probably reflected the real reluctance with which the Communists had approached the issue of population control in the first place. Their promise had been to release productive energies that were stifled under the old society. It was disappointing to have to admit--even with the excuse that the situation was temporary--that the release of energies would not quite cope with the consumption needs of a growing population. It is likely that the leadership was generally hopeful that a surge forward in the economy would soon take place to vindicate Communist theses and permit progress under positive rather than negative slogans.

Perhaps because of this attitude, the Communists seem to have pushed the birth control bandwagon with something less than a full heart. In 1956, birth control advocate Shao Li-tzu charged the propaganda was inadequate, and officials of the Ministry of Public Health made the same point. In 1957, demographer Chen Ta declared, "I have great respect for the

SECRET

Communist party for publicizing this problem...but so far nothing has been done." In 1958, progress reports submitted to the Ministry of Public Health indicated that the cadres were not giving serious attention to birth control propaganda. (1) (2)

Whether a more forceful campaign would have elicited a much more positive response from the people is uncertain. As it happened, the campaign seems to have had no significant effect on the birth rate. Shao Li-tzu in 1956 commented on the widespread ignorance of birth control techniques that he found during an inspection trip in the countryside. In 1957, another writer observed that the use of contraceptive methods was still mainly limited to government workers. A People's Daily editorial at this time acknowledged, "Of course, we have to take fully into consideration the fact that the propagation of birth control among the masses may meet with many difficulties." A European who visited China in September 1957 had a difficult time finding a birth control clinic in the countryside. At one collective farm, he asked the peasants whether they had heard anything about birth control; he was answered with uncomprehending stares. There is evidence that the Communists did get around eventually to bringing the message to much of the countryside, where contraceptives were offered for sale. "Very few people used them," was the typical remark of peasants to Western interviewers. (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

Leap forward

Given the anti-Malthusian tradition and the Communist faith in the high productive potential of a socialist society, it was perhaps inevitable that the birth control campaign would slacken once the faith seemed close to vindication. By the summer of 1958, the "leap forward" was in full trajectory, and the leadership was confident that the extraordinarily ambitious economic targets it had set for the country would be realized in the main. As it turned out, they were generally realized in industry while falling far short of realization in agriculture. But in both sectors, there was indeed a genuine leap not merely in the economic aggregates but in per capita achievements as well.

The leap forward movement set out to demonstrate that miracles of production could be achieved if China's manpower

SECRET

were properly organized and inspired. What amounted to labor armies were set up for water conservancy and other rural projects. In the countryside, primitive industrial plants were introduced that would, with a minimum of capital investment, occupy the vast pool of underemployed peasantry. The newly organized communes enlarged the size and areas of agricultural enterprises and permitted the ready transfer of farm labor from project to project with a minimum of idle time. Both in city and on farm, the hortatory slogans (e.g. "Catch up with Britain in 15 years") aimed to raise the popular tolerance for long overtime hours and speed-up techniques.

Not all the energy was transformed into matter. But determined to get all hands occupied, the Communists at times found an insufficiency of hands for all the activities they introduced--deep plowing, sparrow killing, backyard steel furnaces. The apparent labor shortages were sometimes cited in support of the thesis that China needed more rather than fewer people. "Because of careful cultivation and tilling, the need for manpower has been doubled," averred the People's Daily. (1)

The objective of Communist planning during the leap forward year of 1958 was "to bring into play the activism and creativeness of the broad working masses." The theoretical journal Study in March 1958 published Po I-po's strictures against the "reverse effects" induced by conservatism in planning, by uncourageous striving for "balance." The times were no longer encouraging for those who were still concerned with the population-resource balance. Birth control advocates had to guard against the "reverse effects" of their cautionary statements. They must on no account depress the mood of the Peking University students, whose wall newspapers affirmed that "if they are adequately mobilized and organized, the 600,000,000 people will emit inexhaustible light and heat such as are released during a nuclear explosion...a large population is not a stumbling stone to the progress of science, but on the contrary, a tremendous force." (2) (3) (4)

What followed was not so much an about face in the regime's birth control policy as a decision to hold the campaign in abeyance at least while the party line emphasized the value of big battalions.

China is a country of campaigns--family planning, literacy, (5)

-25X1

SECRET

SECRET

hygiene, political study. When a campaign is under way, you are not allowed to forget it for an hour. All the mass media hammer the point away unrelentingly. "But this was not now the case with family planning." The poster exhibitions had a neglected appearance; the crowds were uninterested. The response of those Chinese he queried was, "Of course the campaign continues, but it has not been a great success."

As the ideologists worked it out, the proper standpoint now was one which stressed that the population problem in China was not basic, that the economy could in fact support many times the present 650,000,000, but that birth control was nevertheless an appropriate policy for a planned society. The position was most explicitly set forth by Shu Chung, writing in People's Daily on 6 June 1958 and in the July Peking Review. "The rate of population increase in our country," said Shu proudly, "is the highest in the world, and its population is also the largest in the world." By the end of the Second Five-Year Plan in 1962, he foresaw a Chinese population in excess of 700,000,000. Five years later, it would approach 800,000,000. But the Malthusians were being disproved by events; industry and agriculture were being developed at unprecedented speed. (1)

This does not mean, continued Shu, that the regime would allow population to grow "in a blind, uncontrolled way." On the contrary, population increase would be planned just like the other variables of the economy. In time, Shu was confident, the populace would be highly responsive to the demographic targets set by the regime. "With culture and scientific knowledge spreading on a mass scale, the prospect is that planned birth will be progressively understood and accepted by the people."

As the matter stands now, the practice of birth control has official sanction. The means are available to those who want them and can afford to buy them. But the leadership, exhilarated by the agricultural and industrial advances of the last two years, is apparently unwilling to return to birth control as an active propaganda theme until the economic growth curve shows signs of flattening. (2) 25X1

SECRET

The treatment accorded 80-year-old Ma Yin-chu for his article in the November 1959 issue of New Construction is indicative of today's restraints on the birth control advocates. The heart of Ma's argument, advanced with unique courage on several occasions after "hundred flowers" had withered in mid-1957, was that population growth is a serious obstacle to capital accumulation in China. Chou En-lai himself had implied as much as the eighth party congress in September 1956. But no emphasis on this line of argument had been tolerated for over two years. (1)

To the invective that followed the publication of his thesis, Ma replied in the January 1960 issue of New Construction, "I will accept the challenge single-handed and will fight until I die. I will never capitulate to these critics who are set on bringing others to submission by force and not by reasoning." There was an element of the extraordinary in the whole debate that possibly reflected indecision in influential circles; the US Consulate General in Hong Kong commented that the "really curious imponderable here" was not Ma's defense of his beliefs but rather that they were published by the Communists. The evidence, while inconclusive, is consistent with the surmise that Ma had patrons in the party who favored an active birth control program to cope with the population problem. The old gentleman was simply too outspoken, however. In April 1960, he was dismissed from his post as president of Peking University. (2)

SECRET

SECRET

IV. POSITIONS OF THE PARTY LEADERS

Chinese Communist statements about population have been highly, although not perfectly, correlated with the character of economic programs in force or under consideration. The step-up of birth control propaganda from late 1956 to mid-1957 coincided with a period of concern over the strains attending the 1956 "upsurge" and with the subsequent "ebb tide" in 1957. Conversely, the slackening of birth control propaganda since 1958 has been associated with "leap forward" targeting in agriculture and industry. On a priori grounds, it seems probable that advocates of comparatively moderate economic programs (e.g., Chen Yun, Li Fu-chun, perhaps Po I-po) would be most disposed to favor measures to limit population increase. Those who are more congenial to ambitious targeting (e.g., Liu Shao-chi, Teng Hsiao-ping, Tan Chen-lin) would, on the same ground, seem likely to prefer a muting of birth control propaganda and a stress on the economy's ability to advance faster than the rate of population growth.

The record bears out the a priori judgment broadly, but not perfectly. The record is complicated by the fact that leaders in both groups have shown some appreciation of the population problem, speaking out with varying degrees of frankness on some occasions but inclining generally to silence on the subject since 1958. The review of individual positions presented below suggests that there may indeed have been some debates on the population question within the politburo but that all the Communists at this level approached the issue discreetly. If a split should occur eventually in the leadership, it is possible indeed that the contending group will cite "errors" of viewpoint on the population question. It seems likely, however, that the charges and countercharges will revolve primarily around issues on which the Chinese leaders have spoken out with more conviction than on population.

Mao Tse-tung

The utterances of Mao on the population question are reflective of the party's generally ambivalent attitude on the subject--reluctance to appear defeatist about the economy's ability to keep pace with population increase, coupled with uneasiness at the magnitudes that 2.5 percent compounded annually ultimately come to. As the undisputed leader of the

SECRET

SECRET

party, Mao could readily have squelched the regime's birth control propaganda that had its beginnings in 1954, that reached its full flower in 1957, and that reappears occasionally even in the period of leap forward. Clearly he condoned if he did not endorse the propaganda. His own public statements evidence an evolution of attitude that has not yet fully formed.

He has of course been unequivocally hostile to suggestions that the Communists might prove unequal to the task of supporting the ever-expanding population. A Red Flag article in June 1958 recalled Mao's reaction in 1949 to Dean Acheson's allusions to overpopulation in China. "Among all things on earth," said Mao, "man is the most precious. Under the leadership of the Communist party, all miracles can be created so long as there are men. We refute Acheson's reactionary theory. We believe that revolution can change all things. A new China with a vast population, rich resources, well-off livelihood, and flourishing culture will materialize before long. All pessimistic views are utterly groundless."

25X1

In the liberalization period of early 1957, Mao apparently took a more definitive stand, but again the evidence is not firsthand. Birth control proponent Chung Hui-lan, speaking at the sessions of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in March 1957, alluded to "the wise directive of Chairman Mao concerning the need of planned birth control to regulate the population of China." The details of the directive were not described, and Mao himself apparently recoiled from the spotlight.

The reference to Mao's "wise directive" may be an allusion to remarks made in his "secret speech" on contradictions in February 1957. A version of the speech which circulated

SECRET

SECRET

in Warsaw had it that Mao enlarged upon the problems that attended too rapid population growth and that he strongly advocated limitations on the size of families. The edited version of the speech released in June, after liberalization had run its course, omitted this and other statements which Polish revisionists had found so appealing. As the official version of the speech put it, Mao made no statement favoring birth control. He did concede that China's large population gave rise to some "difficulties," but he was critical of those who resisted efforts to turn "negative factors into positive ones." More explicitly, he chided those who argued that "the fewer the people...the better." (1)

As far as the open record goes then, Mao (and the party along with him) has shied from close identification with the proponents of population limitation. His off-the-record remarks reflect some awareness of demographic realities, but he does not seem fully persuaded that an all-out birth control campaign would be opportune now, however necessary it may become later.

Liu Shao-chi

During "hundred flowers" in early 1957, the Chinese press divulged the fact that Liu Shao-chi had convened a symposium on birth control back in December 1954. He has thus evinced an interest in the question of population limitation, but he is not on record as supporting birth control in public statements. The issue is possibly one that is not fully resolved in his own mind and on which differences of view within the party are admissible in accordance with the principles set forth in his 1941 article on "Conflicts in the Party." As Liu stated it, if after full discussion "a minority of comrades still have different views, they have the right to preserve their views, on condition that they absolutely obey the majority in matters of discipline and action." (2)

As one of the chief doctrinaires, he has probably been most concerned about maintaining the purity of the party's position against Malthus and neo-Malthusians. At the second session of the eighth party congress in May 1958, Liu leveled his sharpest criticism at the pessimistic scholars who "argued that as the population grows, consumption will increase and there won't be much of an increase in accumulation." Their views, said Liu, "go counter to Marxism-Leninism." The great (4)

SECRET

SECRET

forward leap "has not only completely knocked the bottom out of their contention that agriculture cannot make quick progress but also blown sky high their argument that a big population impedes accumulation."

The plausible surmise is that Liu, along with Mao and probably the majority of the leaders, is appreciative of the race between economic growth and population increase. Deep-rooted Communist that he is, he has a strong predilection for emphasis on methods that promise to accelerate economic growth. But, to borrow a slogan that the regime now employs in another context, Liu would acknowledge that it is best to advance by "walking on two legs" and would not reject out of hand an effort to curb the birth rate. He would simply disavow formulations on the population issue that call into question the potential for economic growth or seem likely to dampen the popular ardor to realize this potential. If forced to the choice, he would perhaps say that it is better to leap forward on one leg than limp forward on two.

Chou En-lai

25X1

In contrast to Liu Shao-chi, Premier Chou En-lai has been interviewed on numerous occasions by visiting foreigners, and he has several times made [redacted] remarks favoring birth control. The population question was brought up [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] in the fall of 1955. Chou first assured [redacted] that China had no intention of seeking lebensraum beyond its own borders. The Chinese Government did appreciate the fact that there was a population problem, said Chou, and pinned great hopes on bringing presently barren regions into cultivation. Chou also mentioned the birth control clinics which were being established throughout the country. 25X1 (1)

Chou's remarks about this time [redacted] in Peiping were in the same vein. Population was a problem but one which the Communists were confident they could handle. Again, Chou alluded to the reclamation of waste lands and the activities to promote birth control. 25X1 (2)

Interviewed by a Indian visitor in the summer of 1956, Chou is said to have used the word "overpopulated" in discussing the bond of common interests between India and China. A few months later, he told [redacted] that China today needed more contraceptives. 25X1 (3) (4)

SECRET

SECRET

At the eighth party congress in September 1956, Chou spoke in favor of a "reasonable amount" of birth control. He declared that there must be frequent shortages of materials and only transient surpluses in a backward economy like China's where "the population is large"--a presentation from which a more meticulous ideologist like Liu Shao-chi would probably have shied as bordering on un-Marxist pessimism. It is possible that Chou at this time was indeed more susceptible than Liu to the influences of Ma Yin-chu and other neo-Malthusians (by Communist designation), who belabored the point that rapid population growth impeded the accumulation of surpluses for capital investment. Ma has alluded to a personal friendship with Chou, and it was through Chou's influence that Ma is said to have obtained release from a Nationalist jail during World War II. (1)

It would be easy to overanalyze the differences between Chou En-lai and Liu Shao-chi on the population issue. Chou has been somewhat less guarded in his remarks, but these were made in a period when the regime's interest in birth control was more avowed than it is today. When he spoke, it was in the general tenor of the party line at the time, which Mao and Liu may have had more to do with setting than Chou. He is not on record recently as speaking in the vein of 1956. On population, as well as other issues generally, Chou seems to fall in gracefully with the party line of the moment.

Others of the inner circle

In addition to the three discussed above, the topmost echelon known as the Standing Committee of the Politburo includes Chu Te, Chen Yun, Lin Piao, and Teng Hsiao-ping. Evidence on the attitudes of these men is scanty. As a group, they presumably approved the regime's birth control propaganda. Individually, they adhered to a circumspect taciturnity in their public comments, however vocal some may have been in the secret Standing Committee discussions.

The record of Chu Te on the subject is a blank. If he has any convictions at all, they would possibly be shaped by his military bent; Chinese military doctrine still attaches great importance to size of armies. As Chief of Staff Su Yu worded it in 1957, "It must be admitted that nuclear weapons have the destructive power to kill huge numbers of people, but they cannot achieve the object of occupation and less still

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

the object of subjugation....In the end, the deciding factor will still be the land army composed mainly of infantry." (1)



It is plausible to deduce that the Chinese marshals, like their military counterparts the world over, are uneasy about programs to limit the population. Framing their values in terms of national power rather than individual welfare, military men tend to associate declining populations with social decadence and expanding populations with national vigor. In this line of thinking the marshals are of course not alone, but are in agreement with many civilian statesmen who aspire to great power status for their countries. Sun Yat Sen (whose position on the population issue was not consistent over the years) took alarm on one occasion when estimates seemed to show that China's population was declining. Apprehensive that such a development would lessen the chances for China's restoration to great power standing, he declared:

About a century ago, France, acting on the belief that she had already reached the Malthusian limit, began to practice family limitation. Today, the French people are reaping the painful effects of a declining population and are encouraging the increase of numbers to ensure France's permanent place among the nations of the world. Nowadays in China, some young men are also influenced by Malthusianism and commence to control births. (3)

The other marshal in the Standing Committee, Lin Piao, made only rare appearances (probably because of illness) between 1953 and 1959. There is thus no record of his attitude during the years when the Chinese Communists were frankest on the birth control issue. A man whose outlook is decidedly military, he presumably shares with Chu Te and other marshals some sense of disquiet about measures to limit population size. This is a judgment, however, which rests wholly on grounds of plausibility rather than evidence.

- 30 -

SECRET

Chen Yun, who has leaned to comparative moderation in economic planning, attaches considerable importance to the maintenance of living standards. A statement ascribed to him in June 1957 had it that "we must first make arrangements for the people's livelihood, second those for production, and last those for capital construction." The arrangements for the people's livelihood he evidently thought would be complicated by too rapid population growth, for his report on the state of the economy in March 1957 included the observation that "a large population and a high rate of consumption are the difficulties in our economic life."

His most explicit statement on birth control was made in September 1957 before the Third National Congress of Chinese Women:

In order to protect the health of women and children, to improve conditions for the rearing of children, to improve family life, and to speed up socialist construction, we will continue the promotion of planned childbirth on a nationwide scale--excluding areas of the national minorities. This implies promotion for the adoption of planned childbirth among the broad masses of people according to their own wishes and circumstances.

Chen's phrasing was in harmony with that of the Communists generally at the time. He may in private have gone further and conceded validity to the formulations of Ma Yin-chu and the other "neo-Malthusians," but the point is speculative. Some of his comments in December 1956--supporting trade in "free markets" and production by private enterprise in "secret workshops"--do suggest a susceptibility to economic as distinct from purely doctrinaire arguments.

The seventh man of the standing Committee, Secretary General Teng Hsiao-ping, delivered the preliminary report on the completion of the census to the Government Administration Council in 1954. He offered no interpretive commentary apart from expressions of pride in the quality of the census work. He has taken positions clearly opposed to Chen Yun's on economic issues such as free markets and clandestine factories, and the inference--but not firm conclusion--would be that Teng has stronger reservations about birth control than Chen. A man whose record shows a partiality to "upsurge" and "leap forward," Teng would share something of Liu Shao-chi's attitude: grudgingly accepting perhaps that population limitation was necessary in practice but seeing a deleterious negativism in the birth control arguments.

SECRET

SECRET

Other politburo members

In the case of most other politburo members, there are no public statements to indicate how they feel on the population issue. Inferential judgments of their positions can be drawn on the basis of their group affiliations or general social outlooks (as was done with Chu Te, Lin Piao, and Teng Hsiao-Ping above). The remarks that follow will be confined to the few individuals on whom the evidence is direct or reasonably circumstantial.

Li Fu-chun, Chairman of the State Planning Commission, is credited with a sober appreciation of the economic realities. He is also, however, alive to the political realities, and his views on the population question have been carefully phrased to accord with the prevailing party line.

Insofar as personal associations are indicative, it might be noted in passing that Li's wife, Tsai Chang, is a fairly high-ranking party official in her own right (head of the Women's Work Committee of the Central Committee) and is on record as saying in September 1956 that the party favored birth control "to a certain extent." Li himself, speaking to the All-China Congress of Trade Unions in December 1957, called China's population a great asset but acknowledged that "of course there are bound to be difficulties." As he put it, "With a big population...there will be certain limitations on the growth of our financial and material resources for some years." (1)

In his Red Flag article of October 1959 "On the Big Leap Forward," Li's emphasis was entirely the other way. Man, as he now explained, is society's most precious asset. With the elimination of capitalist exploitation, it had become possible to bring into full play the strength of more than 600,000,000 people. He criticized those with "right opportunist" ideas who looked on China's big population as a heavy burden which prevented rapid economic advance. (2)

Financial expert Li Hsien-nien is cast in pretty much the same mold as Li Fu-chun. In September 1957, Li Hsien-nien was sufficiently impressed with the population problem to observe that "agricultural production falls behind the people's needs." In February 1958, on the other hand, he of course saw leap forward as "entirely possible." The two Lis are obviously both (3)

SECRET

SECRET

practical politicians, and their inner convictions are only imperfectly reflected in their public statements. Experts in economic arithmetic, the two seem reasonably sensitive to the problem of population growth in China.

Tan Chen-lin has in recent years replaced the more moderate Teng Tzu-hui as the regime's spokesman on agricultural policy. Apparently anxious to extract the largest possible amount for the regime from the countryside, Tan has been particularly critical of those who took it upon themselves to deplore the low living standards of the peasants. In a People's Daily article of 5 May 1957, he decried the "superficial comparison" that showed peasant earnings to be less than urban wages. The thought may have occurred to Tan that a population limitation program would also serve to increase the amount of grain that could be taxed or bought at artificially low prices by the regime, for he conceded that "China is overpopulated!" Tan did not go on record as an individual in favor of birth control, but he has associated himself with the regime's policy on the subject as set forth in the Draft 12-Year Agricultural Program. He submitted the program for official approval on two separate occasions: The first in September 1957 to the central committee and the second in April 1960 to the National People's Congress. Section 29 of the program contained the pertinent statement on birth control. (1)

With the exception of the minority nationalities areas, birth control should be publicized and popularized in all densely populated areas. Family planning should be promoted to prevent the development of excessively heavy burdens on families and to enable children to receive better education and have better employment opportunities. (2)

The draft program had been first formulated in January 1956, and it is uncertain that Tan had much of a hand in the wording of all the provisions--in particular the section on birth control. In view of his official preoccupation with rural problems, however, Tan would perhaps be more disposed than other ardent leap forward proponents to concede some merit to population limitation arguments. In the opinion of the US Consulate General in Hong Kong, Tan's speech to the National People's Congress in 1960 "betrayed an undertone of uneasiness...and some doubt as to whether sheer manpower alone will be enough to meet production needs." (3)

SECRET

SECRET

Among the alternate members of the politburo, propagandist and party theoretician Chen Po-ta--long a spokesman for Mao--has been the most explicit on the population question. His formulations are wholly anti-Malthusian. Speaking to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in February 1956, he fumed at "Malthus' preposterous theory of overpopulation." (1) There was, in fact, no sign of overpopulation, he asserted. There was, he conceded, a food question, which would be solved by the transformation of agriculture from individual to cooperative organizational forms.

The line-up

If any significant point emerges from a review of politburo members' views on the population issue, it is that all have taken fairly safe positions, at least as far as their public statements go. People's Daily and other party publications have gone into far more detail in discussions of the issue than any of the major leaders. The ostensible protagonists in the debates have been non-party or lesser party figures. If there is any line of division at the politburo level, it does not seem to divide zealous proponents from opponents of birth control. The encouragement of birth control is official policy, and no one speaks against it.

Some are, however, more disposed to speak for it than others. The theoreticians of the party--Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-chi, Teng Hsiao-ping, Chen Po-ta--all or almost all must have supported the decision to inaugurate a birth control campaign. Liu Shao-chi, for one, and perhaps some of the others as well, even took some personal initiative to get the campaign under way. But as a group, they are distinguished by a clear reluctance to make individual statements that would in the least seem to compromise their uncorrupted Marxism.

The government administrators, particularly those with economic outlooks--Chou En-lai, Chen Yun, Li Fu-chun, Li Hsien-nien, for example--have been more disposed to make personal statements that explicitly or implicitly favor birth control. This was done only when the regime was pushing birth most actively. When the life went out of the birth control most campaign--even though it remained official policy--the government administrators, like the party theoreticians, called attention to the virtues of a large population...

SECRET

SECRET

The military figures in the politburo have kept their tongues. Because of misgivings on the presumed effect of population limitation on national power, they are probably no more enthusiastic about birth control than the party doctrinaires. But their record is not indicative of strong opinions on the question.

In sum, the leaders have differed in degrees of enthusiasm (or, better said, lack of enthusiasm) rather than convictions. The task may not so much be to resolve differences among the leaders as to settle on a satisfactory and satisfying theoretical position. In the meantime, all must couch their utterances in carefully guarded phrases.

SECRET

SECRET

V. POPULATION DOCTRINE AND THE SINO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP

Chinese Communist theoreticians feel bound to develop propositions that are broadly acceptable to Communists abroad as well as at home. Some foreign Communists are of course more equal than others; the Russian nod is particularly important. When vital interests of national policy are involved, however, or when the immodest desire to assert a doctrinal authority equal to Moscow's is not contained, Peiping has taken theoretical stances at odds with the Kremlin's : witness the dissonance over contradictions, over communes, and over global strategy. Since the doctrinal issues have their bearing on the solidarity of the Sino-Soviet relationship, it is in order to examine the Kremlin's reaction to Peiping's treatment of the population question.

Marx and Malthus

The Communist impatience with "population explosion" propositions is long-standing. As Malthus presented his theory--that population tends to increase faster than the available food supply--the phenomenon of mass poverty transcended the particular social order. He advanced a proposition that was held to be true whatever the reformers did about the Poor Laws, whatever the revolutionaries did about feudalism and capitalism. To Marx, the Malthusian theory was sheer apologia for the status quo, and he reacted with the venom that has become so characteristic of Communist polemics. Malthus was not merely wrong but dishonest:

Malthus was altogether a plagiarist by profession. One has only to compare the first edition of his work on population with the work by the Reverend Townsend to become convinced that he does not use the latter as raw material, as an independent producer would, but that he copies and paraphrases him, like a slavish plagiarist although he nowhere mentions him, keeping his existence a secret.

When he brought the argument from ad hominem to substantive grounds, Marx took the position that there was no absolute law of population that was valid for all

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

societies. If there was in his day a surplus of workers, the overpopulation was relative. The apparent manpower surplus was not merely a derivative of the capitalist order; it was the very essential of a viable capitalism, constituting the "industrial reserve army" that forced the workers to accept less than the value of their production. As Marx saw it, the situation became progressively worse for the masses under capitalism. His abstruse argument made the demand for labor dependent on the supply of "variable capital," which tended with time to fall relative to the magnitude of fixed capital. The outcome was for the laboring population to become "relatively superfluous."

The threads of Marx's arguments are never easy to follow; the relevant point for this study is mainly that he conceded no validity to the Malthusian theory, either as an explanation of poverty under capitalism or of the limitations on progress under socialism. It is possible that he took so uncompromising a stand on tactical rather than logical grounds. The ends of the class struggle would hardly be served by conceding merit to an argument that seemed to him in the main so hostile to revolutionary aspirations. Viewing the potentials of a socialist society as some optimists today anticipate the effects of dramatic technological breakthroughs, Marx possibly felt like them that "population explosion" arguments were trivial for the present (if not harmful), however pertinent they might become for the conditions of a later era.

He did not consider it useful to elaborate on the future. But inwardly he may have realized that population could not go on expanding forever. It would not go on expanding forever, he intimated at one point, under the civilizing effects of the socialist order. The high fertility of the proletariat was evidence of the degrading effects of capitalism; he saw an analogy to the fecundity of those animals that are preyed upon by other species.

Engels was no less hostile to Malthus, and for the same reason. In 1844, he affirmed that population pressed, not against the means of subsistence, but against the means of employment. In other words, capitalism set limits to population growth that fell short of the strictly technological capabilities of society. Like Marx, Engels apparently advanced his argument mainly to discredit Malthus, not as a statement of the ultimate Communist position on the population

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

question. Nearly 40 years later, in a letter to Kautsky, he wrote more frankly:

If, at some stage, communist society finds itself obliged to regulate the production of human beings, just as it has already come to regulate the production of things, it will be precisely this society, and this society alone, which can carry it out without difficulty. (1)

On several occasions, Chinese have alluded to this remark of Engels' as doctrinal justification for the birth control campaign. In general, the Chinese approached the matter with due respect for the sacred texts. They were dutifully hostile to Malthus and sought support for birth control in postulates (health of mothers, etc.) which were largely specious but acceptable on Marxist grounds. The Chinese understood that the situation had a certain delicacy. Apart from a few loose statements made during the liberalization period of early 1957, they tried earnestly to express their doctrine and policy in a manner that would not give offense even to strict constructionists in the Kremlin or elsewhere. (2)

The Soviet Viewpoint

Two considerations shaped the early Russian formulations on the population question. First, it was incumbent on party spokesmen to reject Malthus, to adhere firmly to the Marxist standpoint that the revolutionary upsurge of energies under Communism could be counted on to provide for all. Second, it was mandatory to criticize the man-dominated family, to favor the emancipation of women. If contraceptive practices furthered this second objective, it was necessary to make clear that they were not condoned because of any apprehensions about over-all population growth. "We are unconditional opponents of neo-Malthusianism," said Lenin, but "this does not prevent us in the slightest from demanding the abolition of all laws which place penalties either upon abortion or upon the circulation of medical writings dealing with methods of preventing conceptions or similar laws." (3)

Soon after the revolution, abortion was legalized, the sale of contraceptives authorized, and the laws on family re-

SECRET

SECRET

relationships made extremely liberal by Western standards. Divorce, for example, was readily granted on the request of either party. The quantitative effect of these enactments on the birth rate is indeterminate, but the general encouragement for women to fulfill their roles outside the traditional home tended presumably to reduce the size of families. The grounds, however, were feminist, not Malthusian. (1)

As was to be the case in China some 30 years later, the new sanctions for birth control for a time emboldened a few academicians to advance neo-Malthusian concepts. This limited license was ended under Stalin. In the middle 1930s, there was a tide of denunciation against the expositions that showed any sign of Malthusian taint; Soviet demographers elaborated the proposition that fertility decline was associated with a decaying society. On the legislative and administrative fronts, abortions were first restricted and then forbidden entirely except on medical and eugenic grounds. No further effort was made to promote contraceptive practices. With a new emphasis on the virtues of the socialist family, the Communists adopted measures to make divorce more difficult. Financial assistance to mothers was extended. Maternity and nursery facilities were enlarged. (2)

It is likely that Stalin's apprehensions of a shift in the European power balance to the detriment of Russian national interests was a key factor in the turn of Soviet population policy. The apprehension was made all the more acute after the accession of the Nazis to power and their institution of measures to encourage rapid population growth in Germany. Against this background, Stalin probably viewed with deep misgiving the precipitate drop in the Russian birth rate during the preceding ten years (from perhaps 45 per thousand to some 30 per thousand). Another consideration was the "excess mortality" of the period (deaths may have exceeded births in number during some of the years) arising from famine, undeclared civil war in the villages, and other consequences of the forced collectivization and hasty industrialization. (3)

SECRET

SECRET

If Stalin associated the long-range maintenance of the USSR's power position with demographic factors, the effects of World War II must have given him further distress. The separation of soldiers from their wives cut sharply into the birth rate, and the heavy losses at the front of men of marriageable age seemed likely to have a depressant effect on births for several years after the war ended. The result was the enactment of measures designed to promote female interest in childbearing.

The elaborate system of awards set up in 1944 stipulated a range of honorifics for mothers with five children on up: Motherhood Medal (First and Second Class); Order of Glory of Motherhood (First, Second, and Third Class); and Order of Mother Heroine (Gold Star), with Scroll from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The financial allowances to mothers were most liberal (they had to be cut back later), ranging up to 5,000 rubles upon the birth of the 11th child and 3,600 rubles annually for a certain number of years thereafter. As a further inducement to childbearing, discriminatory taxation was levied on men and women with fewer than three children. (1)

The post-Stalin era brought a modification but not reversal of Soviet outlook on the population question. Khrushchev, like the Soviet demographers of Stalin's day, associates an expanding population with a vigorous society. Speaking to Komsomol members in January 1955, he warned, "if each family has only one or two children, the population of the country will not grow but will be on the decline. And we must think about the development of society." (2)

Unlike Stalin, however, the more recent leadership seems disposed to recognize the humanistic considerations

SECRET

SECRET

that impelled Lenin to approve such measures as the legalization of abortions in the 1920s. Criminal sanctions against pregnant women who procured abortions were discontinued in 1954. The remaining prohibitions against abortions were repealed in 1955. It is difficult to evaluate quantitatively the effect on the birth rate of these enactments, which to some extent merely legalized what was already widespread practice. The fact remains that the new leadership, in contrast to the old, was accepting the considerable downward influence of abortions on fertility rates.

25X1

the USSR in 1957, abortions ranged from 30 to 85 percent of live births in individual hospitals.

After the birth control campaign got well under way in Communist China, statements in Soviet media favoring contraception seemed to increase somewhat--whether by coincidence, in sympathy, or possibly in competition with some of the Chinese propaganda is not clear. In the middle of 1957, Soviet doctors were urging the establishment of special women's clinics to give birth control advice. They also advocated pamphlets and posters on contraception and an expanded supply of contraceptives. Later in the year, the Soviet Minister of Health urged "serious scientific research to discover new contraceptives" since the widespread practice of abortion tended to promote gynecological disease. A Moscow broadcast in July 1958 to Southeast Asia was critical of a French demographic journal for the statement that Marxists opposed birth control propaganda. The Soviet state did indeed encourage a high birth rate, but individuals were free to choose; contraceptives were available in any chemist's shop and freely advertised in the medical journals. It was necessary to oppose the "anti-scientific and reactionary" theory of Malthus, but this was not to preclude "a realistic and truly humane policy on the question of population under socialism."

SECRET

SECRET

In summary, Soviet population policy and commentary under the post-Stalin leadership took a turn which reduced the room for doctrinal controversy with China. Had Stalin lived, it is possible that Peiping's birth control campaign would have occasioned greater distress to the Kremlin, for the blatant pro-natalist line of his time suppressed the feminist and humanistic considerations that were modifying influences under Lenin. But as Khrushchev apparently viewed Chinese population doctrine and policy, they called for no comment from Moscow. The Chinese were obviously more concerned about population growth in China than a good Communist would be about population growth in the USSR. While the Russians condoned birth control, the Chinese advocated and encouraged it. The differences of attitude and approach made perhaps for some awkwardness, but they did not occasion the snide comments from top Soviet officials that were engendered by other Chinese doctrinal initiatives, e.g., on contradictions and communes. Basic to the preservation of accord was Peiping's scrupulousness in seeking grounds for birth control that were by and large in harmony with current rationales in Moscow.

The East European experience

There remains still another indication of Soviet disinclination to take issue with Peiping's handling of its population question: the USSR acquiesces in the population limitation measures adopted in other bloc capitals. Warsaw has taken a particularly advanced position. With the highest birth rate on the European continent next to Albania, Poland came to the decision in the middle 1950s that a cutback in the rate of population growth was essential both to maximize the amount of funds that could be directed into investments and to avoid a deterioration of per capita incomes. In April 1956, the Polish Sejm legalized abortions under certain conditions. In January 1960, abortions were authorized virtually at the will of the applicant. The sole requirement was a simple declaration by the woman that "she is in particularly difficult material conditions justifying interruption of pregnancy."

By 1958, a Birth Control Association and planned parenthood centers had been established in the country. The propaganda took on strong antireligious overtones. In August 1958,

SECRET

SECRET

for example, the party daily Trybuna Ludu carried a long article which charged the clergy with encouraging believers to break the civil edicts pertaining to marriage, birth control, and divorce. This line of attack continues. In January 1960, Trybuna Ludu charged that the clergy had organized a campaign against planned parenthood, abortions, and the sale of contraceptives and had further blackmailed pharmacists into refusing to sell contraceptives. The daily took Cardinal Wyszynski to task for asserting that the Polish people had no reason to fear high birth rates. It was the State, not the Church, retorted the daily, that would have to build schools, houses, and factories for additions to the population. (1) (2)

Recent Polish commentary implicitly impugns the statements of Soviet demographers that high birth rates are to be associated with dynamic societies. The illustrated weekly Swiat put it as follows in April 1958:

Let us reject the fictitious suggestion that a high birth rate is proof of improvement in the standard of living. One should admit boldly that the excessive birth rate is one of the factors which adversely affect the standard of living and is even...the cause of misery... (3)

As the Poles became increasingly frank in giving their real reasons for favoring population limitation, they took up positions from which the Chinses carefully shied. Job opportunities, it was stated, were not sufficiently numerous to take care of all new entrants to the labor force. Speaking to the central committee in October 1959, Gomulka attributed the meat shortage in part to the high birth rate. Speaking to the same audience in January 1960, chief of the Planning Commission and politburo member Jedrochosi observed that Poland's high birth rate forced the regime to invest more than countries with low birth rates in industries that served consumers. As he foresaw it, over a third of net investments over the next five years would have to be earmarked for the purpose of merely maintaining existing per capita levels of consumption. This line of argument by Ma Yin-chu in China had cost him position and friends. (4) (5) (6)

In Hungary, the Communists have taken their position on the more acceptable feminist ground. As Radio Budapest

SECRET

SECRET

framed the rationale in September 1959, "Since the constitution grants complete social, political, and economic equality to our women, it would be an infringement of their rights not to allow women to decide whether they should bear children and how many children they should have." Not that the broader national economic interest was denied; the party newspaper Nepszabadsag acknowledged in May 1958 that "the growth of population is also an economic problem." This thesis was illustrated by references to classroom and housing shortages, rather than by any developed argument to show that population growth hindered investment and national economic growth. Nevertheless the regime had clearly departed from earlier positions banning abortions and the sale of contraceptives. (1)

Under the terms of the decree promulgated in June 1956, doctors were permitted to perform abortions at the request of mothers even if the pregnancies did not endanger the mothers' health. The result of this measure was a rise in the number of legal abortions from some 35,000 in 1955 to 120,000 in 1957. Although the increase represented in large part merely the legalization of what had been illegal practice before, the authorities were appalled at the numbers and decided to encourage publicity for contraception as the better method to prevent unwanted births. Leaflets were printed on the techniques of contraception, and prenatal and women's clinics were instructed to give women advice on how to prevent pregnancies. (2)

In Czechoslovakia, the law forbidding abortions was liberalized in December 1957. The following year there were about 38 legal abortions for every 100 births. A birth control center opened in Prague in 1957 gives advice on contraception. The low birth rate in Czechoslovakia (17.4 per thousand in 1958), however, exerts no real pressure on the authorities to encourage contraception except as the preferred alternative to abortion. (3)

Although East Germany and Albania have not legalized abortions, it is evident from the programs of the other countries that Chinese population policy has not been a cross-current in the Communist mainstream. The Chinese ran for a time well ahead of the other currents (with the exception perhaps of Poland's) but this did not occasion any intrabloc polemic on Peiping's course. The one prevailing feature in population policy and doctrine throughout the bloc has been the insistence on retaining Malthus as the Lucifer of the plot. Beyond this, the Communists have tacitly accepted variety in the population programs that may be followed in the different countries. (4)

SECRET

VI. THE GEOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATION

Moscow's failure to take issue with the Chinese policy on birth control reflects more than a disinclination to publicize doctrinal divergencies with an important ally. There is evidence that the Russians, sharing a long common frontier with the Chinese, have their moments of "yellow peril" anxiety. This is an aspect of the long-range national interest that has apparently suggested to Kremlin leaders the rationality of taking satisfaction rather than displeasure in policies to curb population increase in China.

Chinese internal migration

Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, Tibet, and the Tibetan-populated province of Tsinghai comprise more than half of China's land area. They hold perhaps 3 percent of China's population. The image of teeming hordes is applicable to the areas of China east of a line drawn from Manchuria southwest to Yunnan Province. Elsewhere, China has some of the world's emptiest spaces.

As buffers to absorb Chinese population increase before it presses against the Sino-Soviet border, these spaces give dubious comfort to the USSR. In the first place, very little in-migration of ethnic Chinese is sufficient to swamp the local minorities which have often been responsive to Soviet influence. Sinkiang particularly was a sphere of Soviet influence in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In the early post-war period, the Russians were able to sponsor and support a revolt against the Nationalists in the Ili area of Sinkiang; after 1949 they retained a measure of economic influence for several years by operating oil, nonferrous metal, and civil air enterprises jointly with the Chinese Communists. In the case of Inner Mongolia, the influx of Chinese and the political redrawing of boundaries have made the Mongols a minority in their own "autonomous" territory; they now are outnumbered seven to one by the Chinese. If there is in this Chinese population movement toward the border any ultimate implication for the Soviet position in Outer Mongolia, it is perhaps intimated in the irridentist sentiments Mao once expressed to Edgar Snow:

When the people's revolution has been victorious in China, the Outer Mongolian Republic will automatically become a part of the Chinese federation of its own will. (1)

As matters turned out, the Kremlin was able to obtain the Chinese government's recognition of Outer Mongolian independence before Mao came to power, but the Chinese Communists still publish maps that dispute Ulan Bator's and Moscow's versions of the China-Mongolia boundary line.

In the second place, the migration of Chinese into the border areas does not have the compensating advantage for the USSR of significantly easing population pressure in China at large. The population carrying capacity of the border areas is low. The terrain and climate, though varied, are uniformly unfavorable to large-scale agricultural resettlement; barren plateaus, extensive mountain ranges, meager grazing lands, vast wastelands, extremes of aridity, long winters, short growing seasons in small oases.

25X1

The statistics on "new lands" settlement are sketchy. [redacted] the relocation of 1,300,000 persons between 1949 and 1957--less than 200,000 yearly on the average. The number was probably a good deal higher than this average in the later years, but it was always in the hundred thousands as compared with natural increase of some 15,000,000 annually. (2)

Most of the internal migration in China (perhaps three million or so a year) has in fact been to the cities from the surrounding countryside rather than to the border areas. The "blind infiltration" into the cities has led the authorities at various times to tighten controls on travel. Certificates of employment from urban labor agencies, certificates of acceptance from schools, or other such guarantees have to be presented before permission is granted to peasants to migrate to the cities. These measures prove ineffective to stem the flow when "spring famine" in the countryside reaches disaster proportions. In the spring of 1960, a hundred thousand and more peasants swarmed into each of such major cities as Peiping and Canton. (3)

As most observers evaluate the prospects, it is the industrialization of the already settled areas rather than (4)

SECRET

the development of the border regions that will continue to afford the more important outlet for China's surplus peoples. The flow to the border areas will be statistically significant in relation to their present populations and will tend, therefore, to eliminate the vestiges of Russian, Mongol, Tibetan, and other non-Chinese influences in those areas. This interregional flow, however, will remain minor by comparison with the high volume of natural increase in the country as a whole. Even considered in conjunction with the flow to the cities, it will not allay the qualms of those individuals who apprehend eventual Chinese demands for lebensraum.

The Siberian "vacant lot"

The population of the Soviet lands adjoining China in the Far East is about 6,000,000. On the other side of the boundary line, Manchuria has perhaps 50,000,000 Chinese. The presumed danger from the population disparity notwithstanding, the Russians agreed in the 1950s to work jointly with Peiping on projects that would in fact seem to facilitate rather than discourage migration toward and to the USSR. The two countries cooperated, for example, to construct the railroad from China to the USSR that transverses Outer Mongolia. After the line was opened on 1 January 1956, there was a visible expansion of Chinese contacts with the Outer Mongolians; Peiping extended technical aid to Ulan Bator, and some 10,000 Chinese are said to have gone to Outer Mongolia to work on construction projects. (1)

Further to the east, the Russians agreed to a project for joint research and exploration in the Amur basin during the years 1956 to 1960. Joint field studies began in 1956 with a view to developing plans for the development of hydroelectric power, waterways, and flood control. According to a Pravda news account of 12 November 1956, "large masses of virgin land were found to have climatic conditions very favorable for the development of agriculture." There are obvious benefits that will accrue to Russian districts around the Amur; the point is that these benefits (and the general advantages to Moscow of promoting Sino-Soviet harmony) for the present seemed to outweigh apprehensions about Chinese spillover across the border. (2)

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

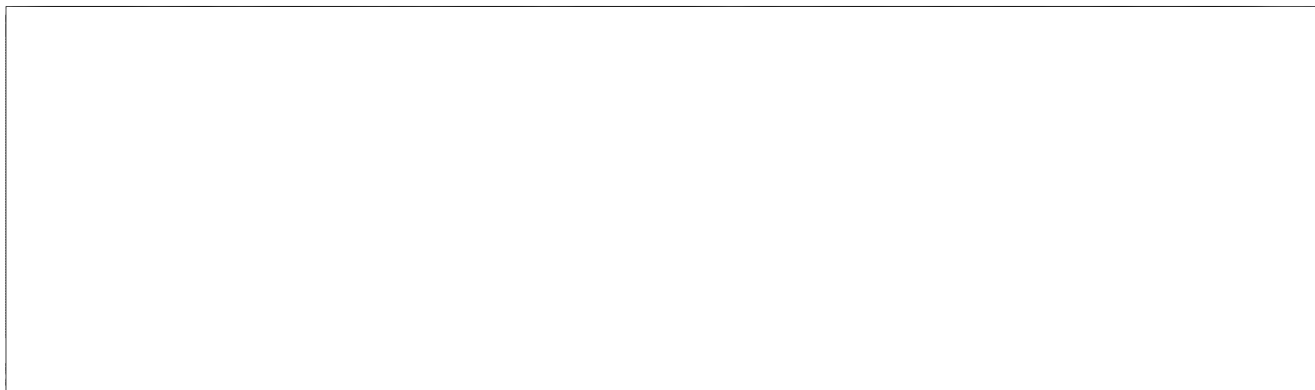
If the Kremlin's anxieties for the near future have not been acute, there is fairly good reason. First, there has been no objective sign of Chinese Communist inclination to push a mass migration across the border in search of arable land. The Soviet Far Eastern provinces--lightly populated as they are--are barely self-sufficient in food grains. Even in their southern sectors, the winters are severe, although the growing period is long enough for certain crops. Farther north the farmers are limited to the cultivation of a few quick-growing varieties. Permafrost is the land feature of most of the area north of the 55th parallel. The region has not attracted Russian tillers. Until technological innovations bring precedent-breaking changes, it will have very limited attraction for Chinese farmers.

Second, "land hunger" is not a predominant motivating force in Chinese migration anyway. The bulk of migration within China under the Communists has been from farm to city or from city to city. Emigration abroad in the last century has also been prompted in the main by the desire to take advantage of nonagricultural opportunities in foreign lands. An influx of Chinese into Siberia during the next 25 years is improbable if Moscow does not allow them to take up jobs in the factories and other Soviet enterprises.

25X1

To say that the Russians are not overly concerned about a Chinese influx within the next 25 years is not to say that they will, during this period, be insensitive to changes that might eventuate later.

~~SECRET~~



(1)

25X1

(2)

A further indication that [redacted] analyses are not completely out of line with Communist thinking comes from some remarks of Chang Kuo-tao, a former member of the Chinese Communist politburo. Speaking to a visiting US official in Hong Kong, Chang said that population pressure in China could not occasion Sino-Soviet conflict for "at least scores of years." Chang evidently intended to belittle the issue but could not exclude its ultimate relevance for Sino-Soviet relations.

25X1

(3)

Finally, the historical record may afford some intimation of present attitudes. The population disparity between the Russian Far East and Manchuria occasioned grave concern in Russian circles both before and after the Revolution. The ratio was 30,000 to 9,000,000 at the turn of the century, 1,000,000 to 19,000,000 after World War I, over 2,000,000 to 40,000,000 at the beginning of World War II. The Chinese who crossed over into Siberia were few but unwelcome. In 1900, the Russian authorities in the Amur-Ussuri region pushed the Chinese back across the frontier; nearly 5,000 lost their lives near Blagoveshchensk when driven into the Amur River.

(4)

In the Soviet era, the Russian interest in peopling the Far East continued and was implemented under the Five-Year Plans. After Japan seized Manchuria, the question became all the more urgent; a lightly populated Far East where Soviet armed forces were dependent on supplies from Europe, would be an obvious handicap in a two-front war. Ten percent of the total budget in the Third Five-Year Plan (1938-1942) was allocated to the development of the Soviet Far East and East Siberia. The ethnic composition of the peoples of the area was considered to have its bearing on national security; by 1939, the prudent authorities had removed the Koreans and Chinese to Central Asia.

(5)

(6)

(7)

The defeat of Japan has brought no diminution of the Soviet drive to people the Far East with Europeans. Financial inducements to persuade farmers to colonize Primorsky Krai on the Chinese border in 1957 included free transportation for the family, cash payments based on family size, credits to build homes and to stock farms, and exemption from taxes and state grain procurement for five years. (1)

The skein of considerations that have impelled the Russian authorities to encourage European migration eastward of course include threads of economic interest as distinct from the problems of military security. Were there no Japan or China, an overland migration toward the Pacific would probably have occurred anyway. The record suggests, however, that national security interests have carried considerable weight in the past and that the size and racial composition of the population in the Soviet Far East remain matters of importance to military as well as economic planners in the Kremlin. There seems to be no great worry that the Chinese will want to push into the area to take up farm lands in this generation; but the growing number of nonfarm job opportunities in the Soviet Far East would certainly attract many Chinese if the barriers against population movement across the border were led down. The Russians presumably still recall the need to relocate suspect populations during World War II, and they are making no move to let the barriers down.

The balance of forces

The more sophisticated forebodings of population expansion in China do not envisage the mere swarming of Chinese masses across frontiers. For all the "living space" arguments of Japanese militarists in the 1930s, the seizure and development of Manchuria resulted in only limited Japanese emigration. (Some 800,000 Japanese lived in Manchuria in 1940.) In the modern world, militant industrial societies can extend their areas of economic and political hegemony without exporting much manpower. The presumed danger to the USSR is not so much from the inflow of hungry Chinese as from Peiping's ever growing ability to assert its political and economic interests as a world power. (2)

It seems probable that Soviet thoughts now and then dwell on this danger since so many Soviet formulations explicitly relate population size to shifts in the international balance. "The main content of our epoch," declared Radio Moscow on

SECRET

22 November 1957, "is the transition from capitalism to socialism. . . . Today more than a third of the population of the world--over 950,000,000 people--have taken the road of socialism." In addition, "over 700,000,000 people have shaken off the colonial yoke." Moscow left unstated--but probably not unconsidered--the numerical distribution within the bloc; some two out of three persons in the bloc were Chinese. By the end of the 1960s the demographic projections indicated the proportion would be around 70 percent. It was difficult to say with much assurance what would happen in the years beyond, but one could hardly exclude the possibility that three out of every four persons in the bloc would be Chinese sometime in the 1980s. China would add about three Soviet Unions to its population by 1985. Striking as the national totals were, one had further to consider that the population disparity would be particularly great in the Far East--remote from the main centers of Soviet power, on the very doorstep of China.

(1)

(2)

Considerations such as these, unarticulated perhaps but nonetheless sensed, may lie behind the comments of the everyday Russians who on occasion talk frankly to Americans. Robert C. North, writing in The Reporter of 5 March 1959, recounts the incident of an American in Moscow explaining the attitude of New Yorkers toward the influx of Puerto Ricans. "...suppose planeload after planeload of Chinese were dumped in Moscow." The American apparently made his point, for the response was said to be, "Yes, yes, now I understand." And North quotes an agronomist in Moscow, "...in China we Russians have a tiger by the tail. We've got to hold on. There's no letting go."

(3)

Sentiments in this vein were also heard by a US Embassy officer in Moscow who attended a lecture on "The Economy and Culture of the Chinese People's Republic" in December 1959. The lecturer alluded to the fact that China's population was approaching 800,000,000. At this point, one of the Russians in the audience muttered, "Yes, and soon they'll turn them loose."

(4)

25X1

SECRET

25X1

[REDACTED] (2)

Pensive ruminations about the Chinese hordes seems to have had just this depressing effect upon one of the functionaries in the Soviet Ministry of Culture. After imbibing perhaps a little too much at a reception in December 1959, he came over to a US Embassy officer and enlarged on the necessity of Soviet-American friendship; as far as the friendship with China went, well, the United States had once been a friend of China's too. The American observed that Sino-American conflict had been tempered somewhat by the facts of geography--the ocean between. "Yes," replied the Russian, "but we do not have this ocean. We have a long land frontier instead." (L)

There is not of course complete uniformity of attitude in Russian circles toward the eventual danger posed by a China with the industrial strength necessary to make its vast manpower resources militarily effective. [REDACTED] (3)

Popular distrust of the Chinese is apparently reinforced by reflections on the problem of survival in nuclear conflict. [REDACTED] (4)

[REDACTED] Semi-jocular statements by many Russians about China's large population were to the effect that China, not the USSR, would survive a nuclear war. (5)

The humor is possibly tailored from cloth supplied by the Chinese themselves, who have often professed to disdain the destructive power of nuclear weapons. "The atom bomb," said Mao, "is a paper tiger...in the end the bomb will not destroy the people. The people will destroy the bomb." [REDACTED] (6)

SECRET

25X1

[REDACTED] (1)

It was possibly to this position that Tito was referring when he spoke to 50,000 people at Labin in 1953:

It is interesting that the Chinese leaders also assail us because of our foreign policy, the policy of coexistence of states and peoples with different social systems...they are bothered by our peaceful policy, our policy of peace, our policy of coexistence. But difficulties in building socialism are not solved by war, even if a country has 600,000,000 inhabitants as some of their people like to point out--in a war still about 300,000,000 Chinese would survive. (4)

The indictment of Tito's and the misgivings voiced or intimated by some Russians may have run also through the private thoughts of the top Soviet leaders; they have not admitted to them publicly. In December 1955, Khrushchev took occasion in Rangoon to scorn the warnings of one "bourgeois leader" who compared China's 600,000,000 people to Russia's 200,000,000 and suggested that aid to China would build up an eventual menace to the USSR. Khrushchev disdained the warning as tentatious, "not prompted by good intentions." (3)

When interviewed by prominent Americans a few years later, the Soviet leader was equally vehement in rejecting the idea of a Chinese population threat. To Eric Johnston in 1958, Khrushchev averred, "China is a great country. By the year 2000 it may have a billion people, but Communist states never think of going to war with each other...there is no fear of China." Walter Lippman the same year and Averell Harriman the following year received similar responses. To Harriman, however, the Soviet leader added some comments that may have reflected inner uncertainties. The Chinese people, he said, presented a special and delicate situation since they had their own way of looking at problems, and the Soviet Union did not want to tell them how to run their own country. (H)

SECRET

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied